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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS

It is my pleasure to present the Commissioner of Firearms Report for 2008 — a year that saw many changes and advances within the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program (CFP).

Perhaps most significantly, the former Canada Firearms Centre and Firearms Support Services Directorate[1] were brought together to form a unified CFP. These firearms-focused groups now combine efforts to improve public safety by informing, supporting and assisting Canadian law enforcement organizations, the firearms community and the public. The CFP, now more than ever before, provides direct firearms enforcement and investigative support to police across the country.

The CFP plays a key role in supporting the RCMP's commitment to *Safe Homes and Safe Communities* and shares a dedication to priorities such as organized crime and terrorism, youth initiatives and Aboriginal partnerships. On an international level, the CFP now sets a standard — its efficacy is acknowledged, and other countries have chosen to emulate it.

As awareness of the CFP's capacities and benefits continues to expand, the CFP is poised to address all firearms-focused issues and needs. Whether overseeing the safety training of a firearms owner in rural Canada or helping to investigate a crime involving firearms in an urban centre, the CFP is committed to firearms safety and to the safety of all Canadians.

William J.S. Elliott
Commissioner

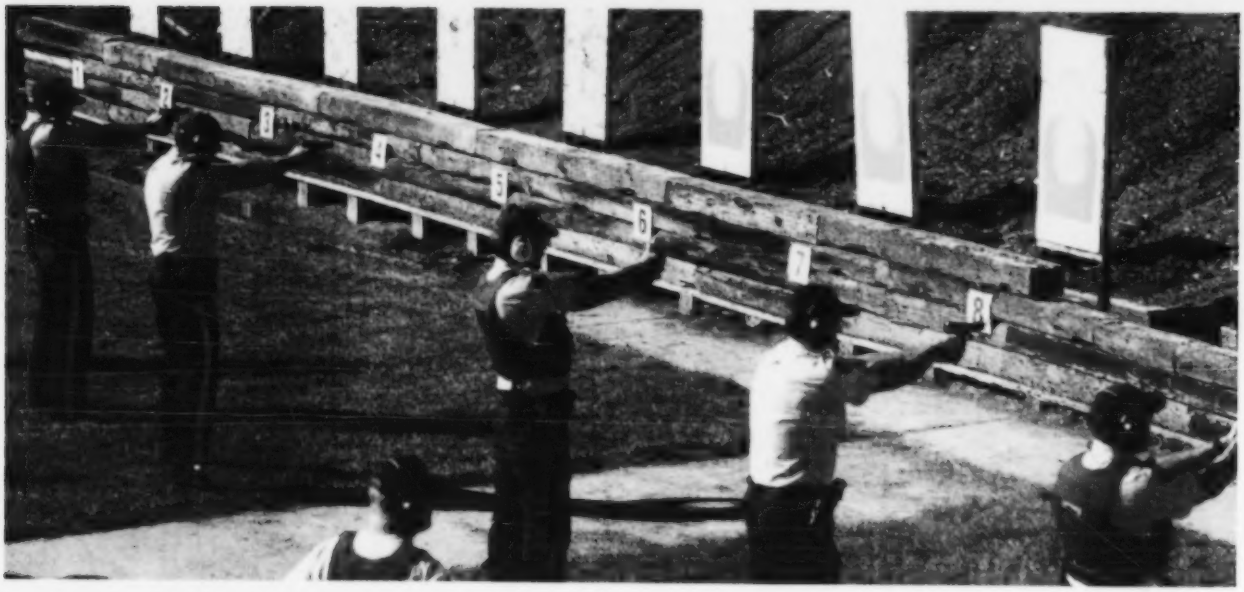
1 Now called the Firearms Investigative & Enforcement Services Directorate. This name change occurred in 2009.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Between January and June 2008, the Canada Firearms Centre (CAFC) was a service line within the RCMP's National Police Services (NPS). CAFC direct service delivery comprised the Firearms Registry, the Licensing Directorate and the Operations Directorate, which included the Central Processing Site (CPS) in Miramichi, New Brunswick.

In June 2008, the CAFC and the RCMP's Firearms Support Services Directorate (FSSD) were brought together to form an integrated entity called the Canadian Firearms Program (CFP). The four sections that make up FSSD are the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST), the Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre (CNFTC), the Tactical Analysis Unit (TAU) and the Firearms Reference Table (FRT). The CFP became part of the RCMP Policing Support Services (PSS) business line at the same time.

This amalgamation of the two firearms-related groups was both logical and strategic. The CFP has an enhanced capacity and effectiveness and a sharper focus on support to law enforcement.



PROGRAM MISSION AND PRIORITIES

Aligned with both the Government of Canada and the RCMP's commitment to *Safe Homes and Safe Communities*, the CFP's goal is to enhance public safety by:

- providing police and other law enforcement organizations with operational and technical support and expertise vital to the prevention and investigation of firearms crime, and;
- reducing firearms-related death and injury in Canadian communities by controlling and promoting responsible firearms ownership, use and storage.

The CFP works directly with front-line police officers by supporting, guiding and informing them in firearms-related investigations. The CFP's active role in addressing the illegal movement and criminal use of firearms both in Canada and internationally strengthens the ability of law enforcement and criminal justice partners to make Canadian communities safer.

The CFP also oversees the administration of the *Firearms Act*. This includes keeping records of the safety training, security screening and licensing of firearms users and the registration and reporting of all firearms. In this way, it promotes and increases firearms knowledge and safety awareness and provides Canadian police with current information on where firearms are likely to be encountered. This enables police to protect the communities they serve as well as themselves while performing their duties.

COMMISSIONER OF FIREARMS

RCMP/CFP SHARED PRIORITIES

The CFP supports four of the RCMP's strategic priorities:

Organized Crime

The CFP's NWEST helps to investigate and reduce the trafficking of firearms supported by organized crime groups. Its expert investigators work with both domestic and international partners to dismantle today's criminal groups. The CFP also provides accurate and up-to-date firearms ownership, licensing and registration data to authorized investigators. This, in turn, helps disrupt organized crime by allowing them to observe criminal firearms patterns within a community.

Terrorism

Illegally obtained firearms are a key tool for terrorists. The CFP is an active player in firearms-related smuggling and other cross-border issues. It is involved in the Cross Border Crime Forum (CBCF) and works with national and international agencies and groups, including the United Nations and INTERPOL, to combat firearms trafficking. The efficacy of Canada's firearms program is acknowledged worldwide, and other countries have chosen to emulate it.

Youth

Although individuals under the age of 18 are not permitted to own firearms, they may obtain a licence that allows them to possess and use non-restricted firearms for purposes such as hunting and target shooting. The CFP promotes the safe storage, handling and use of firearms for all owners and users and recognizes the value of focusing communication and outreach efforts on safety education for youth. According to the Canada Safety Council, suicide is the second leading cause of death among Canada's youth, and the highest proportion of completed suicides are committed with firearms. Secure storage and safety training reduces the risk of firearms being misused for such a purpose.

Aboriginal Communities

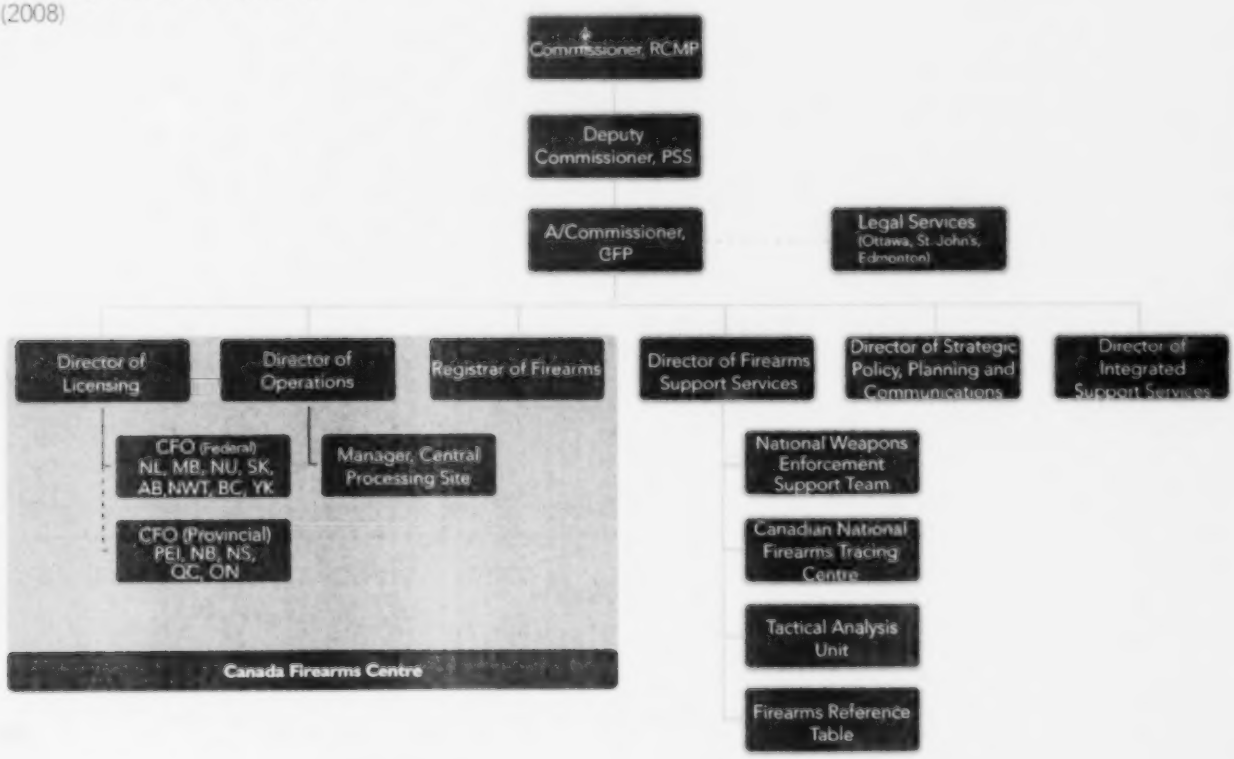
The CFP continues to engage and financially support Aboriginal communities on firearms-related projects at national, regional and local levels. By providing firearms-safety education and training as well as verification, licensing and registration assistance, these projects improve both individual and community safety. The CFP is also committed to researching and pursuing new initiatives and strengthening partnerships in and among Canada's Aboriginal communities.

PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT

The alignment of FSSD with the CAFC under the umbrella of the Canadian Firearms Program created a mutually beneficial alliance that strengthens the foundation of the CFP within the RCMP Policing Support Services.

The amalgamation is strategic and evolutionary, as it offers the opportunity for two previously separate groups to combine efforts, share resources and offer mutual support to front-line enforcement. More importantly, it results in an enhanced collaborative capacity for the CFP to offer support, expertise and resources to law enforcement groups, partners and the public. The new CFP is a comprehensive single source for firearms-related information and assistance.

EXHIBIT 1:
CFP Organizational Structure
(2008)


Commissioner, RCMP
Deputy Commissioner, PSS
A/Commissioner, CFP
Legal Services (Ottawa, St. John's, Edmonton)
Director of Licensing
Director of Operations
Registrar of Firearms
Director of Firearms Support Services
Director of Strategic Policy, Planning and Communications
Director of Integrated Support Services
CFO (Federal) NL, MB, NU, SK, AB, NWT, BC, YK
Manager, Central Processing Site
CFO (Provincial) PEI, NB, NS, QC, ON
National Weapons Enforcement Support Team
Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre
Tactical Analysis Unit
Firearms Reference Table
Canada Firearms Centre

CFP LOCATIONS

The CFP is geographically diverse, with offices and agents located across the country in all provinces and territories.

The Director General and headquarters staff are located in Ottawa, as is a portion of FSSD. NWEST is coordinated through an office in Mississauga, Ontario, while NWEST staff members are co-located with municipal and provincial police services and RCMP contract divisions across the country.

The national call centre and the CPS, where licensing and registration applications are processed, are located in Miramichi, New Brunswick.

Chief Firearms Officer (CFO) operations are located within each province. Five provincial governments—Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario—are taking part in the national firearms program and are therefore funded federally through contribution agreements. The staff in these provinces, including some police officers, are provincial employees.

The governments of the other five provinces—Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia—have chosen to opt out of the national firearms program and, therefore, the CFOs and staff in those provinces are RCMP employees. Nunavut, Yukon and Northwest Territories are also administered by RCMP employees, under the leadership of provincial CFOs.

Despite the differences in governance, the CFOs' work and operating practices are similar from province to province. This is because they are committed to public safety, have the same objectives and mandate, and are all governed by the *Firearms Act*.

Legal counsel is provided through the federal Department of Justice in Ottawa, ON; Edmonton, AB; and St. John's, NL.

KEY PROGRAM PARTNERS

The CFP has effective collaborative relationships with a number of agencies:

Domestic Law Enforcement

The CFP works with and shares information with police forces across Canada. For instance, information that police provide through the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC), which is recorded in the Firearms Interest Police (FIP) database, helps identify people who should not have access to firearms for public safety reasons.

The Canadian Firearms Registry Online (CFRO), which officers can gain access to through CPIC, provides police with critical information about the presence of firearms and their registered owners. This information helps police assess risks when responding to calls, distinguish between legal and illegal firearms, trace the source of registered firearms found at crime scenes and identify and return stolen and lost firearms to their owners.

The CFP also works directly with front-line police officers, helping them during all stages of investigations involving the illegal movement and criminal use of firearms.

THE CFP AT WORK

After an individual drove directly into some parked vehicles, he was taken into an ambulance to be examined. He subsequently pulled out a handgun, pointed it at the medical attendants and threatened to kill them if they touched him. He then fled the ambulance on foot.

The local police apprehended him and found he was carrying a Glock pistol and loaded spare magazines. Canadian Firearms Registry Online (CFRO) checks indicated he was a licensed owner of 31 registered firearms.

NWEST then assisted by preparing the public safety warrant, laying charges and seizing 33 firearms (two of which were not registered), along with thousands of rounds of ammunition.

International Law Enforcement

The CFP cooperates with American and other police agencies internationally in an effort to prevent the illegal movement of firearms across borders. The year 2008 marked the 10th anniversary of the Cross Border Crime Forum, which annually brings together law enforcement and justice officials from Canada and the United States and addresses transnational crime problems such as smuggling and organized crime.

THE CFP AT WORK

The CFP has been asked to assist an international government group with the development of its illicit firearms counter-trafficking program, due to the fact that the director of FSSD had previously contributed to a similar initiative in Europe. The project is funded by partner groups—the CIA, the US State Department, the US Department of Homeland Security and the UK Serious Organized Crime Agency.

Public Safety Canada

The Minister of Public Safety has overall responsibility for the RCMP and its Canadian Firearms Program. The CFP and Public Safety Canada work together to ensure the Minister, parliamentarians and senior government officials have the information necessary to carry out their duties.

Provinces and Territories

The provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia have appointed their own CFOs under the *Firearms Act*, and the Government of Canada funds these operations through contribution agreements between the provinces and the federal government. As previously noted, the CFOs responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador as well as Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are appointed federally and are employees of the RCMP/CFP.

Department of Justice

Responsibility for the *Criminal Code of Canada*, including *Part III (Firearms and Other Weapons)*, rests with the Minister of Justice. The Department of Justice also provides legal advice, drafting and litigation services to the Canadian Firearms Program.

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)

The CFP advises the Minister of Public Safety and works with DFAIT on Canada's international commitments regarding firearms. The CFP also works with DFAIT to ensure that importers are aware of their obligations under the *Firearms Act*. DFAIT issues permits required to export and import firearms under the *Export and Import Permits Act*.

Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)

The CFP advises aboriginal land claims negotiators with respect to firearms legislation and related issues.

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)

CBSA is responsible for assessing and confirming non-resident firearm declarations, collecting the applicable fees and administering other applicable provisions of the *Firearms Act* and relevant legislation. This involves determining the classification of imported firearms, establishing the destination and purpose for importing the firearms, assessing the eligibility of the importer and ensuring all firearms are transported safely and in accordance with Canadian law. CBSA also screens firearms and ammunition imports into Canada.

Firearms seized by CBSA

TABLE 1:
Firearms seized by CBSA by region (2008)

Barrel Length	Atlantic	Quebec	Greater Toronto	Niagara/Fort Erie	Windsor/St. Clair	Northern Ontario	Prairie	Pacific	All regions	% of Total
Antique	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	5	1%
Hand gun	10	23	1	38	56	23	68	109	328	67%
Long gun	8	16	1	3	12	11	21	83	155	32%
Total	18	39	2	41	68	36	91	193	488	100%
% of Total	4%	8%	0%	8%	14%	7%	19%	40%	100%	

2008 CANADIAN FIREARMS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

June 2008 Amalgamation

In June 2008, the RCMP aligned its two firearms-focused organizations, the CAFC and FSSD, to bolster the front-line enforcement capacity of the program. The CFP came under the direction of Policing Support Services (PSS) and a new Assistant Commissioner was named as director general.

The consolidation of these two support and information groups improves and focuses the CFP's ability to provide assistance in firearms-related matters and investigations. It also broadens the range of expertise and resources that can be offered to PSS clients and partners from one source.

Firearms Compliance Incentives

In May 2008, the Minister of Public Safety announced changes intended to encourage compliance among firearms owners and improve client service for lawful firearms owners. The incentives are in effect until May 16, 2009. They include:

- A continuation of the fee waiver for firearms licence renewals or upgrades;
- A continuation of the amnesty that allows individuals with expired licences or those in possession of unregistered non-restricted firearms to take steps to register these firearms without risk of prosecution; and
- An opportunity for eligible holders of expired Possession Only Licences (POL) to apply for a new POL.

Public Agents Firearms Regulations

On October 31, 2008, new Public Agents Firearms Regulations came into effect. They require agencies that possess firearms to report them to the CFP.

These are categorized as either *agency firearms*, which are those used by employees (also known as service firearms), or *protected firearms*, those that have been found, seized or are otherwise being held by the agency. The regulations apply to all police agencies, courts and other public service agencies at all levels—federal, provincial and municipal. They also contain a number of provisions intended to ensure the safe handling and management of firearms in the possession of public service agencies.

These regulations benefit the agencies and contribute to public safety because they provide a valuable investigative and intelligence tool to combat firearms trafficking. They are having a significant impact on investigators' efforts to monitor the location, movement and distribution of illicit firearms in Canada. Maintaining a centralized database of protected firearms will make it easier for law enforcement officers to identify what types of firearms are being seized nationally and in their jurisdiction, and where those firearms are coming from.

THE CFP AT WORK

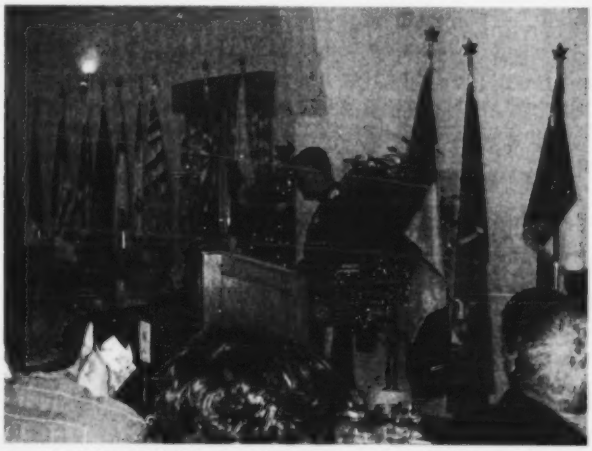
By December 31, 2008, just two months after implementation of the Public Agents Firearms Regulations, 1,518 public agencies had identified themselves as possessing firearms, and 273 of those agencies had reported a total of 12,714 firearms.

Seized firearms held in an exhibit locker by a police service

Canadian Firearms Program 10th Anniversary Event

The Canadian Firearms Program and its Central Processing Site (CPS) in Miramichi, New Brunswick, celebrated their 10th anniversary in November 2008. The celebration took place at the CPS, where guests and speakers included CFP employees and municipal, provincial and federal political representatives as well as a significant number of RCMP officers.

Impressively, it was noted that more than 10 per cent of CPS employees have been with the program since its inception. All of the employees were praised for organizing and fundraising for the event and identified as a prime example of what the RCMP is striving to be: an adaptive, accountable, trusted organization of fully engaged employees demonstrating outstanding leadership, and providing world-class services.



Tim Killam, RCMP Deputy Commissioner, Policing Support Services, at CFP 10th Anniversary Celebration

Inspector Paul Gagnon, Manager, CFP Central Processing Site

Staff Quotes from Central Processing Site:

"I believe the CFP provides a valuable service to our partners and to all Canadians by helping to make our country a safer place to live."

"It is difficult to comprehend how much change and progress has been made with the CFP and the CPS over the past 10 years."

"After coming under the RCMP umbrella...morale at the CPS is at an all-time high, with staff feeling we receive recognition for our accomplishments and achievements."

Enhanced Screening Internet Unit

Following the tragic shooting rampage at Dawson College in Montreal in September 2006, the government approved enhanced security screening for first-time restricted-firearms-licence applicants. This includes interviewing the applicants and their references as well as Internet screening of the applicant.

This Internet screening is carried out by the Enhanced Screening Internet Unit, which has two service components: support service to CFOs and intelligence gathering.

In its primary role, the unit provides CFOs and Firearms Officers with any investigation-supportive information uncovered during an Internet search.

The secondary role involves open-source Internet searches, including a variety of known websites, blogs and social networking sites. A significant trend with firearms crime and violence is pre-event advertisement by individuals via the Internet.

Preliminary and open-source searches are used to gather intelligence and leads of this nature for CFOs and police, allowing them to initiate or assist in investigations. This enables CFOs and staff to identify public safety issues that may not be apparent on an application form or reflected in the telephone interview. The CFP will dedicate more than 40 fulltime employees to this task of enhanced and Internet screening of firearms licence applicants.

THE CFP AT WORK

A concerned citizen provided the police with information about a web page where young men were posing with numerous firearms (handguns and long guns) while drinking and socializing. From comments made on the site, the location of the residence was determined.

Local police were able to identify one of the men on the page as well as his residence. The Canadian Firearms Registry (CFR) was then able to confirm that another man living at that residence, believed to be the father, had a collection of 20 restricted, prohibited and non-restricted firearms. A check of these firearms, provided by the Registry, confirmed they were the same type shown in the photos on the web page.

The detailed list of registered firearms associated to that residence helped to confirm they were the same firearms in the photos. RCMP members were subsequently able to obtain and successfully execute a Public Safety Search Warrant and seize all firearms. Criminal Code charges were laid in relation to the use and storage of the firearms, and the RCMP applied to have the guns forfeited and destroyed so they would no longer pose a danger to the public.

Firearms Investigative Support

The CFP offers two toll-free information and investigative support lines that law enforcement agencies across the country can use for urgent or general access to firearms-related personnel and resources. This same assistance is provided to outside agencies such as the Canada Border Services Agency, the Integrated Border Enforcement Team and local police units.

CFP personnel are available to assist in all stages of a firearms investigation. They help to prepare and execute search warrants, perform seizures, identify and organize exhibits, and prepare for court proceedings. In 2008, there were close to 4,000 direct requests from law enforcement for firearm-related guidance, information and assistance.

THE CFP AT WORK

In 2008, the CFP received 183 direct requests for immediate operational guidance or assistance on its toll-free police urgent support line. While this averages approximately 15 calls per month, the highest concentration occurred in the months of July with 27 calls and October with 29. This correlates with the high number of firearms investigations in western Canada and Quebec during those periods. The majority of callers required assistance in conducting or verifying registration enquiries, analysis of investigation findings for next steps and best practices, preferred wording for search warrants and charge documents, and local NWEST contact information to assist with investigation follow-up.

Firearms seized at a crime scene

Firearms Reference Table (FRT), Identification, Tracing and Pricing

Experience gained through constant exposure to firearms-related investigations equips CFP members to assist front-line police officers in identifying and classifying various suspect firearms. Also, through the maintenance and distribution of a tool known as the FRT, the CFP transfers knowledge to other agencies so they can more capably identify firearms themselves.

The FRT is a computer database tool developed by the RCMP and supplied to all law enforcement agencies in Canada. It is designed to help law enforcement officers accurately identify and classify firearms by providing them with up-to-date and comprehensive reference information on firearms makes and models.

It is the most comprehensive and user-friendly single source firearms reference tool in existence and provides digital-image reference which is associated with a corresponding firearm record. Both components pass a rigorous quality assurance process to ensure data integrity standards are maintained.

Thousands of new and updated firearm records and images are available in every new version of the FRT. The current version contains more than 28,350 records by make and model designations, and over 6,945 of these records have associated image sets. When all the specifications, such as calibre and barrel length, of these records are factored in, there are more than 130,000 individual firearm classification records.

Police use the FRT to identify firearms, initiate tracing requests and confirm the legal classification of a firearm to assist in establishing whether an offence has occurred. The CFP also uses it during the licensing, registration and transfer processes.

Another component of the CFP is the Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre (CNFTC) which assists all Canadian law enforcement agencies in tracing illegal firearms. It has also established a partnership with the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE) whereby they exchange trace information electronically. This has decreased the error rate and significantly improved the time required to receive trace results.

The CFP also keeps records of "street prices" of various illicit firearm purchases throughout Canada. While prices can vary due to supply and demand, geographic location and supply sources, this information is valuable in undercover operations as well as in importation investigations.

THE CFP AT WORK

In 2008, the Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre received 1,532 tracing requests.

The CFP assists front-line police officers in tracing suspect firearms

Firearms Expert Advice and Witness Services

CFP staff provide expert advice and witness services to law enforcement agencies and crown attorneys in relation to various firearms issues. Expert resources are available to help with court preparation and testimony as well as with project planning and execution. If the CFP itself does not possess the required expertise, it will liaise with its partner agencies to get it.

Firearms Training and Outreach for Police

The CFP conducts three levels of police training:

- It conducts front-line police training across Canada including lectures to uniformed officers and specialized units on topics such as public safety seizures, evidentiary seizures, firearms identification and tracing.
- It develops Course Training Standards for firearms-related subjects and trains officers to deliver the courses.
- It hosts an international firearms trafficking conference that attracts law enforcement participants from around the world.

The CFP also continues to provide police forces across Canada with information, publications and other firearms-related guidance and assistance through its outreach services. It maintains lines of communication with various Canadian police associations, attends those groups' meetings and conferences and supports the various firearms-related initiatives that the groups choose to pursue.

Online training is also available through the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN) where police officers can learn how to verify firearms and use the FRT.

Firearms Case Law and Support to the Criminal Justice System

The CFP is continually researching and compiling relevant firearms-related case law and distributing it to investigators. It has created a database that contains close to 1,000 searchable subcategorized case-related items. The number of groups that use this resource is expanding and includes law enforcement agencies, crown attorneys and other government agencies.

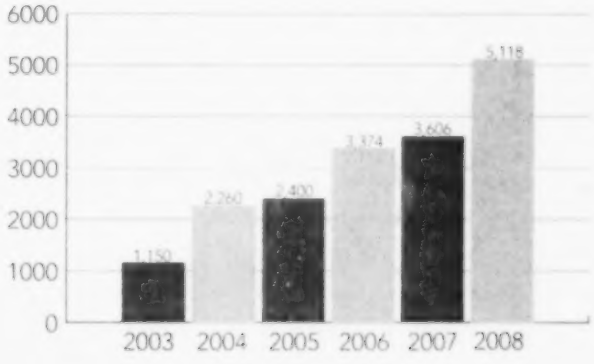
The Crown Attorney Program (CAP) combines the efforts of the Ontario Crown Attorney's Office and the CFP to offer education, coordination and networking with a goal to improving the prosecution of firearms-related offences. CAP is also actively involved in a National Prosecutor Training Program that provides enhanced training in firearms prosecution to specific crown attorneys in each province and territory. The goal is to create a Firearms Prosecutor Network.

CAP has produced training and reference materials such as the Firearms Expert Witness Course, the *Firearms Training Manual*, sentencing guidelines and case-law summaries. This program, along with other CFP units, offers information sessions to the judiciary on all aspects of illicit firearms and has received numerous international training requests from groups such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations.

The CFP also supports the criminal justice system by providing affidavits to assist with the prosecution of offenders. Affidavits are typically requested to determine what firearms are registered to an individual or if a particular firearm is registered. Providing this information in an affidavit rather than attending and presenting findings in court results in significant cost savings for the CFP.

The number of affidavits produced for legal proceedings has continued to increase over the past few years. More than 3,600 affidavits were produced in 2007 while in 2008, that number increased by more than 1,500 for a total of 5,118.

TABLE 2:
Affidavits produced by CFP
(2003–2008)



Firearms Trends and Intelligence

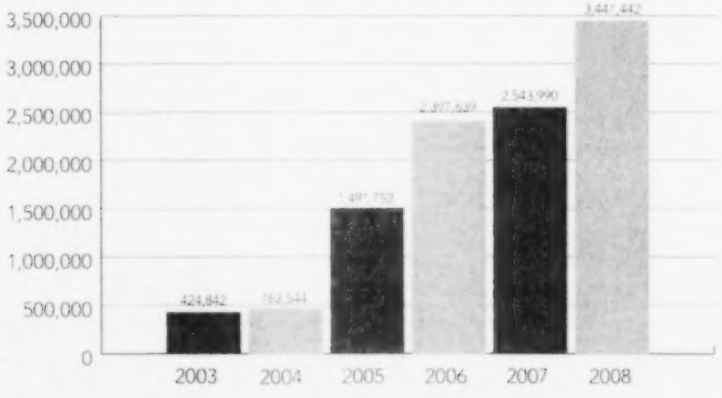
The Tactical Analysis Unit (TAU) provides accurate and timely long- or short-term intelligence support to front-line police officers. By identifying trends and patterns, suspected criminals, smuggling routes and related factors, the TAU conveys a clear analysis of the criminal use of firearms in Canada. The TAU works closely with the CFP's Planning and Performance Management Section as well as the CFP's Research Section. It also assists in specific investigations where the agencies of jurisdiction do not have access to the required analytical support.

TAU has recently expanded to include two positions in Ontario, and further expansion is planned in Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax.

Canadian Firearms Registry Online

The registration of a firearm ties that firearm to the licensed owner in the Canadian Firearm Information System (CFIS), as data on both individual firearms licencees and individually registered firearms is contained in this database. The CFRO, a subset of CFIS, is available to Canadian police agencies via the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system to assist them when responding to calls and conducting investigations. In this searchable application, police officers may query the name, address or firearms licence number of an individual or the serial number or registration certificate number of a firearm. CFRO provides police with real-time access to the information they require in their investigational and operational activities.

CHART 2:
CFRO queries*
(2003–2008)



*Note: Some statistics may differ from the figures published in 2007 as more accurate data has become available.

Firearms Policy Centre Guidance and Assistance

At the federal level, firearms are regulated primarily by the *Firearms Act* and by *Part III* of the *Criminal Code of Canada*. The *Firearms Act* and its supporting regulations set out the rules for possessing a firearm. *The Criminal Code* and its supporting regulations identify and classify the various firearms, weapons and devices. Both the *Criminal Code of Canada* and the *Firearms Act* contain offences and penalties for illegal possession or misuse of a firearm.

The CFP Strategic Policy and Planning Directorate advises senior management on firearms policy, legislation and regulations and represents the CFP on interdepartmental, provincial, federal and international committees and working groups involving firearms-policy issues. They also work with other departments and agencies on various firearms-policy issues and consult with program staff and legal services to ensure CFP-wide integration of firearms policy.

Seized firearms, suppressors and ammunition

Licensing

There are three types of firearms licences for individuals in Canada: the Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL), the Possession Only Licence (POL) and the Minor's Licence. Only the PAL and Minor's Licence are available for new applicants.

- A PAL allows the licence holder to possess and acquire firearms and ammunition.
- A POL allows the licence holder to possess, but not acquire, firearms and to both possess and acquire ammunition.
- A Minor's Licence is available to persons under 18 years of age who wish to borrow non-restricted firearms for specific activities such as target practice or hunting. Licensed minors cannot acquire firearms.

As indicated, a 2008 initiative intended to encourage firearms licensing compliance permitted those with expired POLs the opportunity to apply for a new POL, provided they met specifically outlined requirements.

The CFP also offers clients the convenience of web-based services. Individuals can check the status of their application, change their address or register their firearms through the CFP website (**www.rcmp.gc.ca/cfp**).

THE CFP AT WORK

During what was anticipated to be a routine and quick review of a small northern community firearms business, CFP firearms officers discovered that this business had not been completing firearms transfers correctly. As a result, more than 60 firearms were in the hands of people with no safety training and either no licence or an expired licence.

It was decided the best way to address this public safety issue was to visit the community, equipped with all the necessary applications, materials and information, and hand out free trigger locks to encourage people to fill out the forms.

The community warmly welcomed the CFP representatives, and the residents expressed gratitude for the guidance and assistance they were given. In all, the CFP helped more than 50 individuals with new firearms-licence applications or renewals. They also inspected the business and educated its employees. In four days, they managed to account for all the missing firearms and hand out numerous trigger locks to a group of very appreciative firearm owners.

TABLE 2:

Firearms licences by type and province
(as of December 31, 2008)

Province/Territory	Possession and Acquisition Licence	Possession Only Licence	Minor's Licence	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	37,377	33,740	145	71,262
Prince Edward Island	2,489	4,519	7	7,015
Nova Scotia	25,749	52,395	1,161	79,305
New Brunswick	24,563	53,443	117	78,123
Quebec	271,963	220,684	32	492,679
Ontario	267,815	245,920	4,118	517,853
Manitoba	42,477	39,108	241	81,826
Saskatchewan	47,883	44,658	67	92,608
Alberta	121,984	89,888	880	212,752
British Columbia	109,813	102,222	231	212,266
Yukon	4,096	1,683	56	5,835
Northwest Territories	4,037	1,143	32	5,212
Nunavut	2,641	123	1	2,765
Total	962,887	889,526	7,088	1,859,501

TABLE 3:

Number of licences issued by type (including renewals)
(2008)

Licence Type	Total Issued in 2008
Possession and Acquisition Licence	217,350
Possession Only Licence	167,031
Minor's Licence	3,381
Total Issued to Individuals	387,762
Total Issued to Businesses	1,459
Total	389,221

Firearms Business Support

Under the *Firearms Act*, all businesses and organizations that produce, sell, possess, handle, display or store firearms or ammunition are required to have a valid firearms-business licence. As well, all employees of these businesses who handle firearms on the job must have a valid firearms licence. And all firearms in a business inventory must be authenticated by an approved verifier and registered.

Businesses must submit to periodic inspections by a firearms officer to confirm that they are storing firearms and conducting business in a safe and lawful manner. As of December 31, 2008, there were 4,998 licensed businesses under the *Firearms Act*, of which 2,705 were licensed to sell ammunition only. This number includes licensed carriers and museums.

The CFP offers businesses the convenience of performing firearms transfers through the program's web-based services. It takes just a few minutes to process an Internet transfer of a firearm from a business to an individual and approximately four days to mail out the related paper registration certificate.

The *Firearms Act* and regulations set out the safety standards for shooting clubs and ranges, ensuring the safety of patrons and the general public. These clubs and ranges are subject to inspections by firearms officers.

THE CFP AT WORK

Both business and individual clients are often surprised at how quick and straightforward it is to register or transfer a non-restricted firearm.

Provided the client is licensed and the firearm has been verified to determine its classification, the registration or transfer process can be completed over the telephone or via the Internet in a matter of minutes.

Licence Renewals

A firearms licence for an individual is valid for five years, at which point the individual must apply to renew.

The CFP has taken steps to streamline the renewal process. The average processing time in 2008 for a standard licence application in which all the requested information was provided was 28 days.

Because of the need for reference checks and deeper scrutiny of applicants' backgrounds, the average processing time for new Possession and Acquisition Licences (PALs) was 45 days. This includes a mandatory 28-day waiting period for new PALs.

To encourage compliance, a partially filled renewal application is mailed to the client for completion 90 days prior to expiry. In 2008, a total of 309,161 licences of individuals in possession of firearms (Possession Only Licences and Possession and Acquisition Licences) required renewal. Of these, 66,006 were not renewed.

Many of the non-renewals occurred because the licence holders did not advise the CFP of their address changes. Overall, 27,859 renewal notices were returned as undeliverable.

THE CFP AT WORK

After having many pieces of correspondence regarding firearms licences and registration certificates returned to the CFP as undeliverable, it was discovered that a number of these former licence holders and registered firearms owners were now deceased.

In response to this, as well as a significant number of direct requests for information from executors of estates, the CFP prepared an information brochure which guides readers through all aspects of dealing with firearms that have been left in an estate.

Transforming an operational challenge into an outreach opportunity, the CFP distributed its "Firearms Left in an Estate" brochure to funeral directors, legal societies, public legal education groups and the general public across Canada.

CHART 3:

Firearms licence renewals (POL & PAL)
(2004–2008)

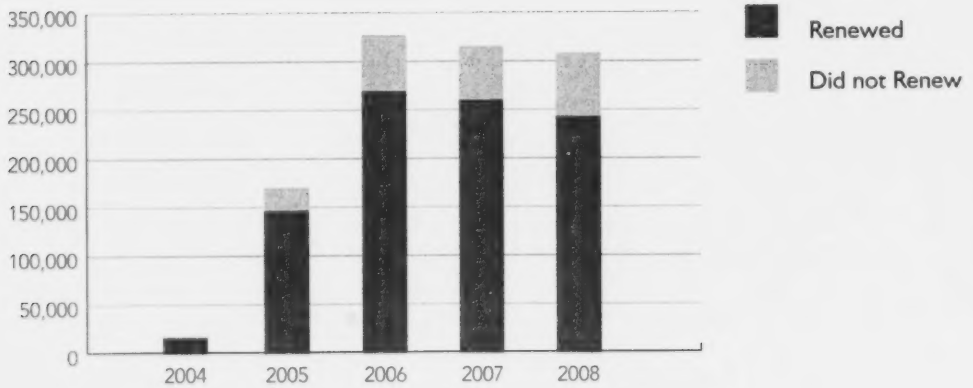


CHART 4:

Average processing time for PAL applications
(2008)

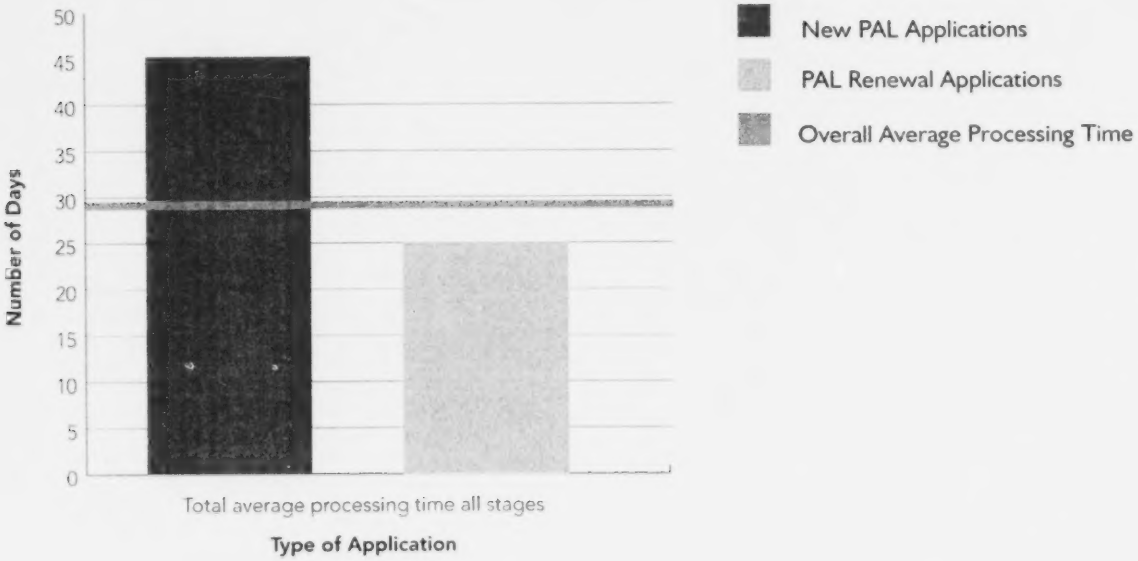


TABLE 4:

Average processing time in days for a standard licence application (2008)

Average Processing Time	Awaiting Data Capture	Data Capture	Decision Granting	Statutory Period	Printing	Total Average Processing Time All Stages
New PAL Applications	8	16	11	8	2	45
PAL Renewal Applications	7	7	8	1	2	25
Average Time to Process PAL Application	7	10	9	3	2	32*
Average Time to Process POL Application	6	7	8	0	2	23
Overall Average Licence Application Processing Time	7	9	9	2	2	28*

**Totals reflect averaged numbers and rounding up or down*

Firearms Registration

The *Firearms Act* requires that all non-restricted, restricted and prohibited firearms in Canada be registered. This links the firearm to the licensed owner in the CFIS database where data on each individual firearms licensee as well as each registered firearm is contained. This linking of firearm to owner contributes to public safety in three ways:

- It holds firearm owners accountable for their firearms;
- It assists in investigations involving firearms as it facilitates the tracing of a firearm to its last lawful owner; and
- It provides police officers with up-to-date firearms information and warns them when firearms may be present at a location so they can better protect themselves and their communities.

A subset of the data contained in CFIS comprises the Canadian Firearms Registry Online (CFRO), which police officers can query via CPIC prior to attending a call.

Registration certificates issued under the *Firearms Act* remain valid unless the firearm's description changes significantly or it changes ownership. When a firearm is transferred to a new owner, the record must be changed to reflect both the de-registration from the original owner and the re-registration to the new owner.

TABLE 5:
Number of firearms registered
(2007 vs. 2008)

Firearm Class	2007	2008	Difference
Non-restricted Firearms	6,539,906	6,659,534	119,628
Restricted Firearms	448,922	478,487	29,565
Prohibited Firearms	226,951	230,583	3,632
Total	7,215,779	7,368,604	152,825

TABLE 6:
Firearm registrations by region
(December 31, 2008)

Province/Territory	Non-restricted Firearms	Restricted Firearms	Prohibited Firearms	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	185,824	4,143	1,634	191,601
Prince Edward Island	21,723	1,660	909	24,292
Nova Scotia	284,913	15,481	7,691	308,085
New Brunswick	263,989	11,443	5,717	281,149
Quebec	1,546,069	60,891	49,015	1,655,975
Ontario	2,001,474	177,022	92,622	2,271,118
Manitoba	323,500	16,046	6,601	346,147
Saskatchewan	376,097	23,550	9,403	409,050
Alberta	814,309	79,070	24,850	918,229
British Columbia	769,333	86,006	31,228	886,567
Yukon	21,040	1,558	442	23,040
Northwest Territories	17,823	1,028	322	19,173
Nunavut	10,156	145	38	10,339
Other	23,284	444	111	23,839
Total	6,659,534	478,487	230,583	7,368,604

THE CFP AT WORK

NWEST provided support to an RCMP detachment after a suspect was stopped with four non-restricted "long guns" in his vehicle. The suspect was evasive when questioned, leading investigators to believe the firearms had been stolen. NWEST conducted CFRO checks on the recovered firearms and determined all four were registered to a local resident and not the person who was in possession of them. The registered owner, who was working out of town, was contacted by police and said that, as far as he was aware, all of his firearms were safely stored at his residence. Police attended the owner's residence and discovered evidence confirming that his residence had been broken into and that all 16 of his long guns had been stolen. Subsequent investigation resulted in the recovery of the remaining 12 long guns from the suspect.

THE CFP AT WORK

Compliance Initiative Data (from May 17, 2008, until December 31, 2008):

Number of calls received at CPS regarding new POL Initiative: 18,493

Number of new POL applications mailed out to clients: 55,484

Number of new POL applications processed by CPS: 11,010

Number of new POL holders who have applied to re-register their firearms: 4,870

Expired POL holders who have transferred all their firearms: 3,942

Expired POL holders who have updated the status of all their firearms to exported, lost, stolen, destroyed, deactivated or protected custody: 2,424

Compliance Initiatives

In 2008, the government announced three initiatives intended to promote compliance. These initiatives are valid until May 16, 2009:

- New Possession Only Licence (POL)—Certain individuals whose POLs have expired are given the opportunity to apply for a new POL.
- Amnesty—A 2006 government-introduced amnesty is extended. Certain owners of unregistered, non-restricted firearms may not face criminal liability, providing they take steps to register the firearms and thus comply with the law.
- Fee Waiver—Extension of a 2006 waiver of the fee for the renewal of a POL or a PAL. The waiver also applies to upgrading licences from POL to PAL, adding new licence privileges, replacing an expired licence with a new one and renewing a Minor's Licence. Licence holders who have already paid these fees will be issued refunds.

Safety Training

Firearms education and safety training are fundamental components of the CFP.

The Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC) was developed in partnership with the provinces and territories as well as organizations with an ongoing interest in hunter education and firearms safety. It was implemented in 1994 by the Department of Justice to provide instruction on the safe handling, use, transportation and storage of both restricted and non-restricted firearms.

With the introduction of the *Firearms Act* in 1995, modifications to the firearms-safety training provided to firearms owners and users were required, and a separate firearms-safety training course with a focus on restricted firearms (including handguns) was developed. In 1999, both the revised CFSC and the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course (CRFSC) were introduced. The *Act* states that anyone wishing to acquire *non-restricted* firearms must pass the CFSC test, while anyone wishing to acquire *restricted* firearms must pass both the CFSC and the CRFSC tests.

Further updated in 2006 and again in 2008, the course material is available in English, French and with closed captioning.

The RCMP CFP is responsible for the continued development, implementation, evaluation and revision of national firearms-safety standards and the CFSC and CRFSC, while each province or territory is responsible for the delivery of the courses.

THE CFP AT WORK

The CFP's NWEST provided support to an RCMP detachment, assisting with a Criminal Code of Canada warrant to recover firearms from a subject who had reportedly pointed a rifle at a co-worker and threatened to kill him. NWEST conducted CFRO checks, which confirmed the suspect had a valid firearms PAL with nine long guns registered in his name. A warrant was granted and executed, resulting in the recovery of all nine long guns, including the suspect firearm and a quantity of ammunition.

CHART 5:

Firearms safety training
(2002–2008)

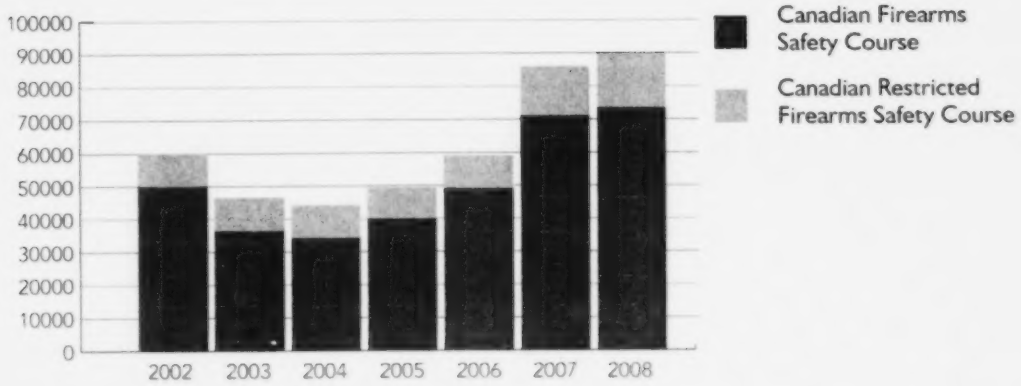


TABLE 7:

Number of students
(2008)

CFSC Students	71,961
CRFSC Students	17,560

THE CFP AT WORK

Following in-depth research into the safety and construction of a variety of shooting ranges around the world, Ireland chose to adopt the RCMP CFP's "Range Design and Construction Guidelines".

These guidelines were officially presented to Ireland in April 2008 at a ceremony in Ottawa. The Director General of the CFP extended an offer to assist with Ireland's implementation of the guidelines, reiterating the RCMP's commitment to international cooperation opportunities. One of the Irish representatives followed up with a visit to Canada in July to meet with the CFP's National Advisor, Range Safety, in Edmonton, where the Irish official took part in range inspector training.

Ireland's Firearms Range Inspector decided to adopt the Canadian approach to range design and construction as it was seen to "be a good fit for Ireland" and is considered to achieve an optimal balance between the legitimate pursuit and enjoyment of shooting sports and the safety of participants, observers and neighbours.

Ireland's decision to adopt Canada's "Range Design and Construction Guidelines" and implement them across the country confirms that Canada has achieved international "best practice" status in this area.

Enhanced Screening Program

In 2008, the CFP implemented a more in-depth screening process for firearms licence applicants as a proactive effort to reduce firearms violence in Canada.

The CFP has developed methods of enhanced security screening for first-time restricted-firearms-licence applicants. They include interviewing the applicant and his or her references, as well as Internet screening of the applicant, as described earlier.

Continuous-Eligibility Screening

All current POL or PAL firearms licensees are recorded in the Canadian Firearms Information System (CFIS), which automatically checks with the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) every day to determine whether a licence holder has been the subject of an incident report in CPIC. All matches generate a report entitled Firearms—Interest Police (FIP) that is automatically forwarded to the relevant CFO for follow-up. Some of these reports require no further action, but some prompt a review of the individual's firearms licence and may result in its revocation, allowing police to seize the firearms. This continuous-eligibility screening reduces the likelihood that an individual who has been identified as a potential risk to public safety will be permitted to retain possession of firearms.

TABLE 8:
Number of confirmed FIP events by province (2008)

Province/Territory	2008
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,314
Prince Edward Island	194
Nova Scotia	4,208
New Brunswick	3,458
Quebec	37,179
Ontario	20,750
Manitoba	5,566
Saskatchewan	3,161
Alberta	12,916
British Columbia	12,396
Yukon	268
Northwest Territories	241
Nunavut	190
Total	102,841

Licence Refusals and Revocations

When individuals apply for a firearms licence, they are subject to a variety of background checks. They are screened to identify potential risks to public safety based on the initial application, and they are continuous-eligibility screened throughout the life of the licence to identify any public-safety risks that may arise over time.

In 2008, 462 firearms licences were refused and 1,833 firearms licences were revoked. CFOs play a vital role in the process of authorizing individuals to acquire or retain a firearms licence. CFOs are authorized under the *Firearms Act* to refuse an application for a licence or revoke an issued firearms licence, based on their assessment of the individual's risk to public safety. The reasons for the refusals vary, with the most frequent reason being the potential risk to others. The most common reason for licence revocation is court-ordered prohibition or probation.

RCMP member doing query from patrol car

TABLE 9:

Firearms refusals and revocations
(1999–2008)

Year	Refused	Revoked
2008	462	1,833
2007	440	1,748
2006	391	2,064
2005	345	2,286
2004	533	2,504
2003	1,099	2,227
2002	1,632	1,518
2001	1,886	639
2000	520	741
1999	217	452
Total	7,525	16,012

TABLE 10:

Reasons for refusals and revocations*
(2008)

	Refusals	%	Revocations	%
Court-ordered prohibition or probation	201	44%	1,366	75%
Potential risk to others	138	30%	276	15%
Potential risk to self	88	19%	211	12%
Mental health	40	9%	139	8%
Violent	47	10%	75	4%
Drug offences	25	5%	59	3%
Domestic violence	26	6%	56	3%
Unsafe firearm use and storage	22	5%	52	3%
Provided false information	63	14%	11	1%
Total	462	142%	1,833	124%

* Note: Because a refusal or revocation can be influenced by more than one factor, the total percentage for all categories of frequency may equal more than 100 percent.

CHART 6:

Firearms refusals*
(2008)

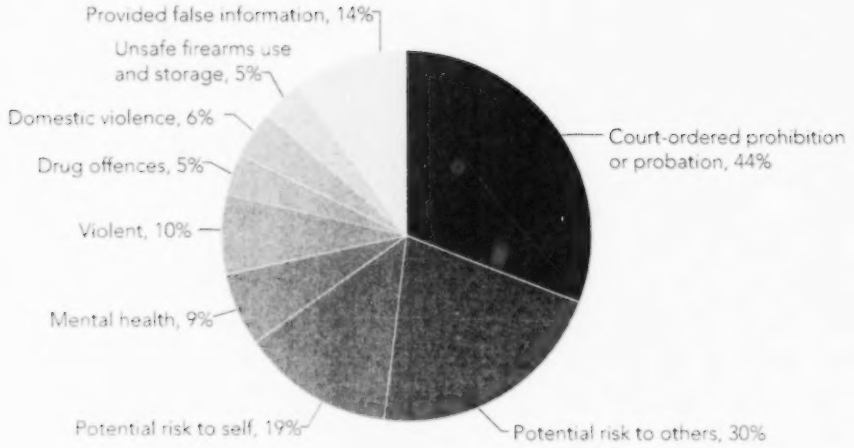
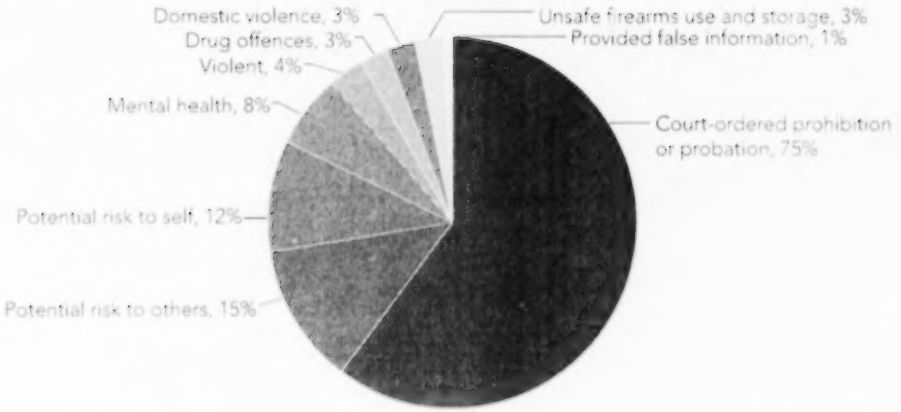

Provided false information, 14%
Unsafe firearms use and storage, 5%
Domestic violence, 6%
Drug offences, 5%
Violent, 10%
Mental health, 9%
Potential risk to self, 19%
Court-ordered prohibition or probation, 44%
Potential risk to others, 30%

CHART 7:

Firearms revocations*
(2008)


Domestic violence, 3%
Drug offences, 3%
Violent, 4%
Mental health, 8%
Potential risk to self, 12%
Potential risk to others, 15%
Unsafe firearms use and storage, 3%
Provided false information, 1%
Court-ordered prohibition or probation, 75%

* Note: Because a refusal or revocation can be influenced by more than one factor, the total percentage for all categories of frequency may equal more than 100 percent.

Firearms Prohibitions

The *Firearms Act* requires the courts to notify CFOs of all firearms prohibition orders in their jurisdictions. Firearms-licence applicants are screened and compared against prohibition and probation orders. If applicants are linked to any of these orders, they would be refused a firearms licence and issued a notice with the details of the court order.

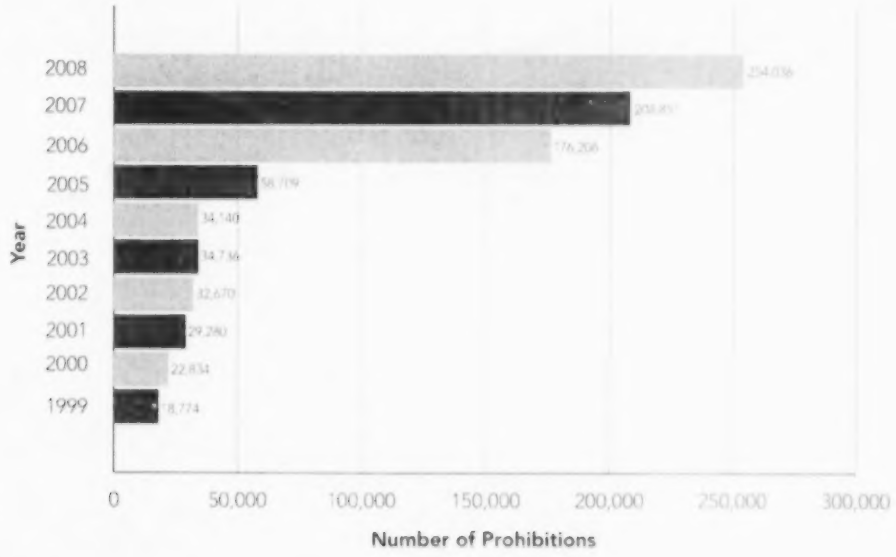
If an individual in possession of a firearms licence is identified as being the subject of a prohibition or probation order, they would be instructed to turn in their licence and dispose of all registered firearms. Upon notification from the courts, the CFO would administratively revoke the individual's licence.

The Registrar of Firearms would revoke registration certificates of registered firearms in these cases and provide instructions to the individual on how to dispose of firearms. The Registrar would also refuse any in-process application to register firearms and advise police regarding the revocation.

Firearm prohibition and probation orders are captured in the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) Persons File and form part of the background and continuous eligibility checks. In 2008, there were 254,036 individuals prohibited from possessing firearms.

The CFP also relies on information from municipal, provincial and federal courts in determining whether an individual is a potential threat to public safety. These court orders are typically civil in nature, and a match against them may result in the firearms officer conducting an investigation that could lead to a revocation or a change in licence conditions.

CHART 8:
Firearms prohibitions (cumulative) (1999–2008)



Disposal of Firearms

The CFP closely monitors the disposal of registered firearms. The option of disposal may be chosen when an individual no longer wants the firearm, or it may be related to a licence revocation or refusal.

This monitoring contributes to public safety by assisting the CFP in understanding the movement of firearms, and this information on the disposal of firearms can be crucial during firearms crime investigations.

Inspections

CFOs are responsible for performing inspections and approving the licences of shooting clubs and ranges within their provincial jurisdictions. They do this to ensure the businesses are operating safely and complying with the *Firearms Act*. Also, they are authorized to inspect firearms businesses or individuals in possession of a large number of firearms to ensure safe storage and handling requirements are met, thereby contributing to community safety.

Assisting and Informing the Public Through Outreach

Outreach activities in 2008 continued to focus on improving public safety by increasing the public's awareness of and compliance with the *Firearms Act*. These activities inform them about the many ways the CFP provides support to law enforcement agencies. With the inclusion of FSSD, there was also the opportunity to incorporate information about the variety of ways the CFP assists front-line police agencies in gathering evidence and investigating persons and organizations involved in the illegal movement and criminal use of firearms.

The CFP participated in or exhibited at a number of annual police association meetings and at a variety of hunting and outdoor shows across the country, providing communications materials and responding to requests for firearms information throughout the year from the public and from police agencies.

Outreach to Aboriginal communities in 2008 included a range of firearms-safety courses as well as linkages with high school curricula.

A variety of media—radio announcements, newspaper and magazine articles, government publications—was used to communicate with the public in an effort to reach as varied and wide an audience as possible regarding firearms safety, compliance with the firearms legislation and client-service initiatives.

COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

The most significant change to the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program in recent history came with the amalgamation of the Canada Firearms Centre and the Firearms Support Services Directorate. The formation of this integrated group of firearms information and support experts benefits all Canadian law enforcement organizations, the firearms community and the public.

The new Canadian Firearms Program shares in the RCMP's goal of creating and maintaining *Safe Homes and Safe Communities*. It is committed to:

Educating and Informing—The CFP is dedicated to providing law enforcement agencies with firearms-related information and training that will increase public and officer safety and assist in their investigative work involving firearms. It is also committed to educating the public about all aspects of firearms safety and is continually developing better and more innovative ways of doing this.

Serving and Supporting—The CFP continues to improve the quality and efficiency of its services, striving to facilitate and encourage client compliance and demonstrate the public safety benefits of universal firearms licensing and registration. Although always committed to supporting law enforcement, the changes to the CFP in 2008 enhance its capacity to provide that support.

The CFP is dedicated to preserving and improving the safety of all Canadians and will continue to strive to reduce the threat from the illegal use and the misuse of firearms in our communities.